

homes and inconsistent enforcement of laws pertaining to slavery victimized freedom-seekers. Of the thousands who escaped toward Michigan, many were captured and returned to their enslavers. Upon Mr. Taylor's escape, he faced the difficult crossing of the Ohio River, and on April 1, 1855, he began a slow, two-week journey through the rugged terrain only by night, avoiding settlements and farms to evade capture. Deciding his progress was significantly hindered by the darkness, he sought to travel by day. Experiencing significant exhaustion as he slowly advanced in his travels, he fell asleep in bushes alongside the road one day only to be awoken by two bounty hunters and their bloodhounds who had taken him prisoner. Narrowly escaping, Mr. Taylor hid in the undergrowth as the bloodhounds and gunshots followed. The next five days of his trip were inconceivably taxing. He traveled five days by foot, without food or water, before being discovered by an abolitionist family who helped him regain his health before recommencing his trip northward. Although he had walked for three weeks, he was still far from his destination.

Just two days after resuming his trip, he was once again run down by bloodhounds. This time, Mr. Taylor was unable to escape his abductors and was arrested to be taken before a local justice. Through good fortune, the justice, an abolitionist, granted his release, and he continued on his way before finally reaching Niles, Michigan. From there, the Underground Railroad network assisted him in the final leg of his trip, east to Detroit and then to his freedom in Windsor, Ontario.

Two years after achieving his freedom, Mr. Taylor returned to Michigan, settling in the Birmingham area. Upon his arrival in rural Birmingham, Mr. Taylor worked as a farmhand and began living with Mr. J.P. Stewart. The Stewart's neighbor, Reverend James S. T. Milligan of the Southfield Reformed Presbyterian Church, was known to be active with the Michigan Underground Railroad network and his farm remained a safe place for freedom-seekers leading up to the Civil War's conclusion. By 1870, slavery had officially been abolished in the reunited country, and Mr. Taylor had continued to build his new life in Michigan. No longer a laborer, Mr. Taylor now farmed his own land with his wife, Mrs. Eliza Dosier, also someone who was formerly enslaved. His position as a respected and contributing member of society grew, and in 1872, Reverend Milligan sought the Taylors' help to set up a new church in Denison, Kansas, relocating the family westward.

The Taylors returned to Michigan from 1876 to after 1880, when they once again relocated to Denison, Kansas. When Milligan retired and left Denison, the Taylors returned to Birmingham in 1893, and were proudly the first African American property owners in town. While Reverend Milligan and Mr. Taylor's connection can be verified through their work in Kansas, it is possible that the two had known each other since Mr. Taylor's escape in 1855 and remained in contact as anti-slavery advocates. Records suggest that, during his time in Michigan, Mr. Taylor may have played a key role in resettling newly freed Black Americans. Census records show several children present in the household who then are absent from the household by the time of the next census. While it is difficult to verify, it is speculated that Black families, such as the Taylors, were

fostering homeless African American minors and orphans, continuing their contributions to the abolition movement by assisting with their transition to freedom. Mr. Taylor faced unimaginable hardship in his early life, but he courageously pressed on, finding his purpose in service to others.

Madam Speaker, it is a great honor to represent the City of Birmingham, Michigan, a community that's history is so closely intertwined with the fight for a more just nation. Its role as a destination for freedom-seekers and home to influential abolitionists, including Mr. Elijah S. Fish and Mr. George B. Taylor, makes the 11th Congressional District proud. I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the rich history of Birmingham, Michigan, and honor the two men whose stories were highlighted today, and may Michigan maintain its role as a destination for freedom-seekers and those who fight for a more just society.

RECOGNIZING THE HONORABLE
CHARLES STONE UPON COMPLETION
OF HIS TERM OF OFFICE
ON THE BELMONT CITY COUNCIL

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, I rise to recognize my friend and colleague Belmont City Councilmember and former Mayor Charles Stone as he concludes his term of office on the city council. The city is losing a truly conscientious and forward-looking leader.

Charles Stone is a lifelong resident of San Mateo County and a resident of Belmont since 2004. He was first elected to the city council in 2013 and then was re-elected in 2017. He is a graduate of Hillsdale High School, the University of California at San Diego, where he received his degree in political science, and Santa Clara University School of Law. He practices law at the Law Office of Katherine R. Moore in Redwood City.

Prior to joining the city council, he served on the Board of Directors of School-Force!, a nonprofit raising funds for Belmont and Redwood Shores schools. His interest in city policy began as he noticed a lack of cooperation between the city and school district. As he put it, "It was more like two fists pounding together than two hands being aligned and I didn't like that." In 2013, he threw his hat into the ring to create more family-friendly policies and those more amendable to working families.

Throughout his time on the city council, Charles Stone has been focused on housing, transportation and economic development. After two terms on the council, and after many long nights discussing housing and the city's general plan, Belmont is one of the few cities in San Mateo County that is on track to meet its state-mandated goals to produce affordable units. The most recent development, Firehouse Square, is 100 percent affordable and has 66 units adjacent to the Belmont Caltrain Station. There are 331 units of affordable housing built in recent years or in the pipeline, along the El Camino Real transit corridor. Charles has been a leader in making this new housing a reality.

As a councilmember, he serves as the council's representative to seven intergovern-

mental agencies and to multiple nonprofits. He has six council committee assignments.

However, his most time-consuming assignment outside of the council chambers is his role as a member of the board of our local transit agency, Samtrans, and as a board member of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (Caltrain). He is an undisputed regional leader in transportation. He successfully negotiated, along with two other local leaders, for the payment of \$35 million to Samtrans for its 1991 purchase of the Caltrain right of way on behalf of three counties. For more than a year, and in the midst of confusion and finger pointing by leaders in other counties, Charles repeatedly and publicly read the terms of the longstanding contract and demanded that the terms not be changed without appropriate repayment of the outstanding debt. The money and new terms were approved this year, marking a rare moment when San Mateo County and its transportation interests were treated equally by the other two counties.

Charles fought successfully to raise the minimum wage in Belmont. He twice served as Mayor. He worked with a neighboring community to end traffic gridlock near a high school. He supported his police department while embracing the need for change to ensure equity. He also supported the arrival of Stanford University to the campus of a small liberal arts university long located in Belmont. During his time on the council, bioscience discovered Belmont. Councilman Stone supported conversion of office space to lab space and the construction of new labs. During the darkest days of the pandemic, Charles and his colleagues created a \$100,000 fund for local businesses, adding to state and federal small business funds. He also appropriately chastised the federal government's business pandemic relief programs for leaving too many behind and for operating with insufficient controls. "Had [the federal government] dug in a little more and spent more time on this I think we'd be in better shape today," he noted in April 2020. I think the GAO auditors tracing fraud would agree with Councilman Stone.

It is now time for Charles Stone to step down from the city council and to regain time to hike with his daughters, Sophia and Sara, around Waterdog Lake. I want to thank him for putting his astute mind to use on behalf of working and middle-class families in San Mateo County for over 10 years. He can honestly state that the difference he made is cast in concrete, framed in steel, and sits within a beautiful city blessed with green hills and oak trees that he cherishes. He improved the lives of tens of thousands. This ex-rugby player is temporarily leaving the field, but the score on the board shows that, despite occasional injuries and perhaps a few involuntary blood donations, he was key to delivering a win for the people of Belmont.

HONORING COUNCILMEMBER JOHN
SAWYER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor John Sawyer of Santa Rosa, California in honor of his retirement and sixteen years as a council member and mayor.